

Ecology taking applications for drought relief projects

On May 15, 2015, Governor Inslee declared a statewide drought emergency. Since then, conditions have only gotten worse and hardships from water shortages are expected to increase through the summer and fall. On June 30, 2015, the state Legislature approved \$16 million in drought relief funding to be used over two years.

On July 10, 2015, Ecology Director Maia Bellon signed an emergency drought funding rule which sets the criteria for awarding grants, where drought has reduced water supplies to less than 75 percent of normal, for public projects that:

- Improve public drinking water supplies;
- Restore commercial crop irrigation; or
- Protect fish and wildlife.

Grants are capped at \$500,000. Grants also require 50 percent matching funds from applicants. An exception to the matching funds requirement is for drinking water supply projects serving less than 25,000 water users, whose users have a mean household income of 80 percent or less of the state average.

In addition, to be eligible for funding:

- The applicant must be a public entity, such as a city, town, county, special purpose district, or Tribe.
- The applicant must be able to complete the proposal in time to effectively reduce hardship during the existing drought declaration, ending December 31, 2015.
- The associated water use must be an existing use under a legal water right, and not a new or expanded use of water.

Questions?

General drought questions:

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Special accommodations

To ask about the availability of this document in a version for the visually impaired, call the Water Resources Program at 360-407-6872.

Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341

Note: The applicant must obtain all required permits and approvals for the project before payment can be authorized.

Examples of eligible irrigation and public water supply projects

- Modifying or deepening an existing well
- Developing an emergency or alternate water source
- Replacement water sources, including purchasing or leasing water or water rights to be used during the drought period
- Constructing an emergency intertie to another approved public water supply
- Conservation measures
- Measuring devices
- Diversion structures
- Leak detection and repair
- Pumps and accessories
- Storage devices
- Discharge lines
- Pipelines
- Canals and laterals with control structures
- Regulating reservoirs.

Additional eligible projects: aquatic and upland wildlife protection

- Capture and relocation of stranded fish.
- Temporary diversion of stream flow to critical bird nesting habitat or wetland habitat populated by priority species, as identified by the state Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).
- Temporary impoundment of water in existing wetland habitat populated by priority species, as identified by WDFW.
- Temporary diversion of stream flow to upland watering devices.

For additional information

- Ecology 2015 drought webpage: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/drought/index.html>
- Emergency drought grant program and how to apply:
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/funding/fo-2015drought.html>
- Frequently Asked Questions on Ecology's Drought Response, publication #10-11-002:
<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/summarypages/1011002.html>